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*Andrew Sloan Draper*

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# Andrew Sloan Draper

Commissioner of Education of the State of New York  
1904-1913

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Died April 27, 1913

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Memorial adopted by the  
Board of Regents

1913

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ANDREW SLOAN DRAPER

ABSTRACT FROM THE JOURNAL OF A  
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE  
OF NEW YORK

*Held in the State Education Building, Albany,  
May 22, 1913*

The Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York met in the Regents Chamber in the Education Building, Albany, at 10 a. m., May 22, 1913, pursuant to a call duly sent to each Regent as provided by law.

The meeting was called to order by Chancellor McKelway.

The following Regents were present: Chancellor St Clair McKelway, Vice Chancellor Pliny T. Sexton, Regents Albert Vander Veer, Chester S. Lord, William Nottingham, Francis M. Carpenter, Abram I. Elkus, Adelbert Moot, Charles B. Alexander, John Moore, and Andrew J. Shipman. Regent Littauer, who is traveling in Europe, had been excused from attendance.

IN MEMORY OF COMMISSIONER  
ANDREW SLOAN DRAPER

Chancellor McKelway addressed the Board as follows:

My friends, this is the first meeting of our Board since I called you to attend the funeral of Commissioner Andrew S. Draper. You then joined with me

in a necessarily brief and informal statement of our sense of loss and of our sympathy with his devoted kindred, on our sorrowing way to his waiting grave.

Before we begin our sessions today I should, I think, formally express our sense of sorrow (and as sincerely as formally), that we have been called on to mourn the death of a citizen, a friend, a colleague and a comrade whom we dearly loved and will deeply miss and do profoundly mourn. In his life he did not seek, did not like and was minded even to repel expressions of regard for him.

The next duty to be done was his preferred subject. That spirit, at once modest and practical, was what bound him and us together with a strength no law could prescribe and in a concord and loyalty which wrought well for education and for the State. He contributed to our usefulness. We sought to keep clear and open the path for him. Never doubting he and we labored to have this Department rise to what it was created to be, to do, to exemplify and to incite for the State and for the Republic.

He was the only Commissioner of Education New York State has had. Yet the standard he could not inherit but did set will be one not easy to equal and difficult to excel. His were abilities which caused every office to magnify under his hands and his were the qualities which enlarged his public usefulness in every public trust. He made every place he held a greater place. Every place he held made him an abler man for the ensuing larger duty.



Though he died when we felt we most needed him, he had already done what he felt was most needed should be done by him. Not that he left no uncompleted tasks but that those which had been completed plainly pointed and largely cleared the way for what should still be done. He laid foundations. He opened paths. He assured to us unification. He expedited the completion of this building. Herein all our departments are housed and homed, and herein their co-operating energies inspire and are inspired by educational forces everywhere.

I shall intrust to others of our Board the resolutions or other forms of tribute which will comprise this Department's tribute to our friend. What we shall say should far exceed his restrained estimate of himself, but it should still follow that measure of moderation in which he always contended praise should be kept, to be believed. It was his contention that eulogy should be marked by accuracy so as not to be charged more with a design of exploiting the praising man than expounding the man praised. That sincere and not cynical estimate of his I leave with you, for we respected his apothegm living and we would in nothing offend his ascended spirit, not impossibly looking down on us now from the opening and attentive skies.

Remarks by Vice Chancellor Sexton

*Mr Chancellor:*

It is not likely that any of us here, or of Commissioner Draper's friends elsewhere, can think it needful

that much, if anything, should be added in our record to the fine and justified affectionate tribute which you have just paid to him.

I am moved to add, to what has been so well said, hardly more than a single thought — if it may be an added thought.

In contemplating his career, I have been much impressed by the fact that therein it is strikingly attested that there is, indeed, “a divinity which shapes our ends.” Such realization takes form in my thoughts in the recurring phrase — The Lord was good to Commissioner Draper. And the conviction is absolute that he was, happily for him and for multitudes of others, from on high ordained for and ordained into his life work.

Manifestly it was part of the divine plan that he should take up the burden of life at a very early age, and we find him when a mere lad of a dozen years earning his own support and keeping himself in school by his own physical labors; and ever afterward he swam by his own unaided strength, with head high above the waters, and carried many others on his shoulders.

That experience of winning his own way, from the alphabet, almost, through the elementary and high schools, and landing himself on his feet as a law school graduate, with the degree of LL.B., at the age of twenty-three years, gave him, as no later-day theorizing could do, a sympathetic understanding of the difficulties which beset the pathways of, and of the especial

needs of, vast numbers of longing, hopeful children, like circumstanced, in every generation, and made him wise and earnest in devising more favoring conditions and in increasing suitable opportunities for their educational progress.

His few years in the practice of law, followed by a brief experience as a judge, led him to a clearer comprehension and helped him to a juster evaluation of the fundamental principles of legal science, and gave him a balanced, judicial poise of mind not otherwise easily obtained.

Running currently therewith he was having a period of great activity in the field of practical party politics — including a term as member of the Legislature. Therein he thoroughly learned “the game” and came to know equally well the men of his generation who were masters thereof, and with their aid, and probably without much perception, as yet, as to where it was leading him, he became, in 1886, Superintendent of Public Instruction in this State, and there began his professional, technical education for his predestined subsequent brilliant career as an educator and organizer and administrator of public educational systems.

Six years there, and two years of successful constructive educational work in bringing order out of chaos in the schools of Cleveland, followed by the ten years of hard work as president of the University of Illinois — giving that institution its real start in life — finished his preparation for his last decade on earth as the first Commissioner of Education of the State of

New York, in which great service he abundantly demonstrated that in being good to him the Lord had intended, through him, greatly to bless the people of this great State.

Under such guidance, his mind enlarged with his varied experiences, his ambitions were purified and his powers so developed that he was able to conceive and bring into being in this State educational policies which will give him enduring fame and make all succeeding generations grateful to him and his Creator.

And the Lord's goodness did not fail him at the end. He was permitted so to round out and complete the work of his chosen, ordained career, that when he was called home from earth he was as ready for translation as man can ever be.

Yet we who had been permitted to be his intimates, we who had learned to know him to an extent which admiration can not express, we who had learned to love him, find our hearts panged by his loss almost beyond endurance or resignation.

Remarks by Regent Vander Veer

*Mr Chancellor:*

Doctor Draper presented a remarkable illustration of reproductive growth. He inherited from his parents all their strong characteristics, such as courage, a determination to meet all problems and responsibilities, and to obtain a solution that brought him success all through his life. His father passed through great physical suffering and when it came to the son to

endure much along the same lines he exhibited the same bravery, strength and will power that is not often transmitted from one generation to another. His growth was one of marked interest. As a boy he observed carefully, was noted in his early days and school life, particularly while at the Albany Academy, for his investigations, and a line of reasoning that enabled him to express himself with an intelligence in his early speeches and in his early public life, that attracted the attention of his seniors, producing much enthusiasm in their associations with him. As an advocate of temperance when but a young man, as a forceful campaign speaker, as a logical debater when in the Legislature, and in his judicial positions later his mind gave evidence of continuous development — a growth that was pleasing and fascinating to observe. He left behind him a record of doing an immense amount of hard work and attained an eminence in his chosen field of industry that is not often witnessed in the competition of the present day.

We shall miss him in our executive duties, we shall miss him along the lines of initiative work, we shall miss him when problems confront us that call for clear, careful reasoning, and we shall ever bear him in mind with respect and affection.

Remarks by Regent Lord

*Mr Chancellor:*

Men of merit, Mr Chancellor, impress us in various ways. We may admire one man's ability to accom-

plish with ease and with perfection of result that which he undertakes to do. We may admire another man for his love of his work and for the enthusiasm with which he engages in it — for an enthusiasm that is inspiring to others as well as vitalizing to himself. And in others we are attracted not alone by actual results accomplished but also by the personality of the man, his kindly nature, his courteous manner, his refinement of speech and of conduct. And when we come to find all these qualities reflected in one man — as to my mind they were reflected in Commissioner Draper — then indeed may we be proud of acquaintance or comradeship or intimacy with him.

Rarely indeed does a man possess so many distinguishing qualities as did our friend; rarely indeed does a man command so entirely the respect and the admiration of his fellowmen. He was a leader of men, sagacious, sane, convincing — dealing with the smaller frictions of life with unusual tact and persuasiveness and abundant geniality and bringing to those great questions that filled his life a largeness of comprehension, a foresight almost infallible, and an ability for accomplishing results that was akin to that of genius and of statesmanship.

We mourn sincerely for Commissioner Draper, for not only has every member of this Board lost a faithful and loyal friend but the Board has lost a leader of inestimable worth and ability on whom we had come to depend and whom we shall miss yet the more and



more as the months roll by. In the reorganization of the State's educational system he brought order out of chaos, leaving his imprint on every detail. In the perfection of the new organization he was yet doing marvelous work when death called him. He was able and faithful in all things and those who knew him must always be grateful for the privilege of companionship with such a man.

Remarks by Regent Nottingham

*Mr Chancellor:*

The name of Andrew Sloan Draper will ever be inseparably associated with the history and development of the educational system of this State, since to a marked extent it embodies his farseeing and statesman-like purpose and policy, and presents in many respects the results of the most notable work of his very active and useful life.

As Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1886 to 1892, he had become somewhat acquainted with the educational work of this State, which was at that time, however, under a divided jurisdiction. He steadily advanced in his chosen field of labor until he was made president of the University of Illinois, in which position he achieved great success and distinction. When Doctor Draper was recalled from the presidency of the University of Illinois to the State of New York, to take charge of its reorganized and unified Education Department, he undertook a most

important and a most difficult task. However, he soon proved himself fully equal to it. His broad sympathy, judicial temperament, diplomatic skill and keen faculty for discrimination between the essential and the unimportant, soon availed to allay apprehension, remove causes of difference and bring about perfect harmony in the administration of the educational forces of the State. He soon realized that this Department, for the proper and effective accomplishment and expansion of its work, required a separate building in which it could be housed and where its various activities could be centered and properly organized. With persistent zeal and rare skill and persuasiveness, he presented the subject to the Governor and the Legislature until the completion of this magnificent building, consecrated to the cause of education, was an accomplished fact. It is a lasting monument not only to his broad and advanced ideas concerning the importance of education to the welfare of the people and the State, but also a constant testimonial to his energy and efficiency in accomplishing the wise and benevolent plan upon which his purpose had been fixed.

As an executive officer of the Board of Regents and an associate in the direction of the educational affairs of the State, he soon inspired us with the highest esteem and regard for his ability and character. Although positive in his convictions and deliberate in arriving at conclusions, he was nevertheless tolerant of the opinions and considerate of the judgment of others.



In all our councils his uniform wisdom, generosity and unselfishness were apparent. Through his attractive qualities of mind and heart, the bonds of affection between Doctor Draper and the individual members of this Board constantly grew and strengthened, and words but feebly express the grief that each of us personally feels at his departure.

Remarks by Regent Carpenter

*Mr Chancellor:*

It had not been my good fortune to really know the late Commissioner of Education until my election to the Board of Regents, and at the time of the first meeting of the Board I attended, our acquaintance had been casual.

I can never forget the kind personal greeting of Commissioner Draper on that occasion and his clever introduction of the new member. It at once dispelled the timidity I felt in coming officially into the presence of the Commissioner of Education and Board of Regents, recognized as masters of the work in hand, of which I had much to learn.

The Commissioner's death was a great shock to me, for I had received a letter from him a short time before expressing confidence in his recovery.

Commissioner Draper possessed executive ability of the highest type, evidenced in the administration of the educational activities of the State, which he brought so nearly to perfection; and although he had suffered

a long illness, and his death seemed premature, he had the felicity of seeing his great projects accomplished.

In his executive work, particularly noticeable was the careful preparation of his papers submitted to the Regents for consideration, which were so perfect that the freest discussion and criticism seldom suggested any considerable modification. He was a very positive man with definite ideas, but never offensive. He was a man of power and courage; he worked for results and obtained them, and expected results from others for whom he was responsible.

One of his greatest achievements was the Education Building and his last public appearance was at its dedication. Weak in body but strong in spirit, his wonderful dedicatory address closed with masterly effect amidst the delighted applause of a critical audience.

I shall remember Doctor Draper for his unusual intellectual ability, his ennobling qualities of heart and mind, his sense of exact justice, his kindly disposition and unselfish devotion to the work of perfecting the school system of the State, earning and deserving the title, "The Great Educator."

Doctor Draper's death is more than a loss; it is a calamity. Few men have left behind more satisfactory results of their life work.

#### *Letter from Regent Philbin*

The Chancellor read the following letter from Regent Philbin:

SUPREME COURT  
JUDGES CHAMBERS  
COURT HOUSE, CHAMBERS STREET  
NEW YORK

*May 21, 1913*

*The Hon. St Clair McKelway, Chancellor of the University of the State of New York, Albany, N. Y.*

My Dear Mr Chancellor:

My retirement from the Board of Regents will prevent my expressing at the next meeting of the Board the very profound sentiment of sorrow that I feel at the death of the late Commissioner of Education and the revered and beloved executive of the Board of Regents, the Hon. Andrew S. Draper.

It is needless to say that my intimate association with him as a Regent, for many years, caused me to hold him in earnest affection and respect, not only because of his most attractive personal qualities, but also on account of the high duty he rendered to the State on behalf of its great educational interests. The place which I occupied at the table of the Board for many years, at the side of Doctor Draper, enabled me to become intimately and thoroughly acquainted with his exalted aims and endeavors. I can not conceive of any one else being so admirably equipped in strong and broad character and zealous, unceasing regard for the welfare of the State. It would be impossible, under these circumstances, to set forth in detail the innumerable instances in which his unusual tact and high

standard of integrity maintained a policy that always secured the hearty indorsement and cooperation of those associated with him. The work which he has done in organizing the great educational system of the State will last for all time and it would be impossible for its usefulness to be impaired even if the administration of the affairs of the University of the State of New York were not confided to men of such high spirit and unusual civic devotion as now compose the Board of Regents.

My recent resignation, deeply painful as it was, because of the severing of relations which I had good reason to cherish so highly and hold most dear, will be less trying because of the fact that my period of service practically terminated with his. It would have been very hard for me to adapt myself to the new conditions that will be made necessary by the administration of his successor, even though I know that the latter will be one whom the Board will select as being worthy of the important trust confided to him.

I extend to my late colleagues my most earnest sympathy in the loss they will suffer because of the absence of Doctor Draper, and trust that they will continue to be sustained in the splendid service that they are rendering the State.

With most affectionate regard to you, Mr Chancellor, and the other Regents, I am

Yours faithfully

EUGENE A. PHILBIN

Remarks by Regent Elkus

*Mr Chancellor :*

It is indeed with great regret that we speak of the loss which not alone this Board but the Education Department and the State of New York has had in the death of Commissioner Draper. We who knew him and associated with him admired him not only as a man of exceedingly great ability but as a man whose character was of the highest. Doctor Draper possessed characteristics which few men possess. He was alike the student and the man of action. He possessed the power of deep and careful study and research as well as the great executive ability required for the position he so ably filled. When we stop to consider the manifold duties performed by him and the admirable way in which those duties were discharged, we realize that we have indeed a task of moment before us in finding a successor who will properly fill the place he has left vacant. Commissioner Draper was a man of great force; his aim and his work at all times was to advance the cause of education in this State and elsewhere.

Remarks by Regent Moot

*Mr Chancellor :*

The eloquent tributes paid to the memory of Commissioner Draper by yourself, the Vice Chancellor, and my brother Regents, who knew him so well, seem to me but just tributes to him.

Up to the time that I became a member of this Board, I had scarcely more than met Commissioner Draper, and my knowledge of him was substantially confined to the high standing and reputation he had attained on the basis of his work as an educator and your able chief executive. When I became a member of this Board, I was cordially met by him, and I at once observed his tactfulness and power in the discharge of his duties. From the first meeting to the last attended by him, I was impressed with his intimate knowledge of the multifarious affairs of this Department and his strong grasp of the problems with which he had to deal. Although it was plain from the first that he was suffering from physical disabilities that would have disabled most men for the discharge of official duties, to the very end I could not see any lack of edge or mental grasp on his part. I doubt if many people ever before heard a man as sick as we all knew he was deliver such a strong and comprehensive address as he delivered at the dedication of this building last October. Nor was this the only evidence of his mental power we witnessed, for at the last meeting attended by him, if my memory serves me correctly, he summed up the main considerations in behalf of two candidates for an important position at our hands, with a judicial poise, fairness, grasp, and look ahead into the future, that so impressed all of us who heard it that it probably proved the determining factor in our deliberations and in our choice of that official.

And after that, when we visited him at his home, and when his recommendations were read to us by another, we still found the same sound judgment and foresight in giving his advice.

He was a strong, sound, able, many-sided, far seeing and efficient educator and executive officer, and we shall be very fortunate indeed if we are able to find a successor who, on the whole, will measure up to his full stature of capacity.

Motion by Vice Chancellor Sexton:

Mr Chancellor, I move that a suitable biographical sketch of our beloved deceased Commissioner of Education, Andrew Sloan Draper, be prepared and, with a page portrait of him, included in the journal of this meeting of our Board, together with the tributes paid to him on this occasion, and that copies of such record be sent to his widow and children.

The foregoing motion was unanimously adopted by a rising vote.



## ANDREW SLOAN DRAPER

Andrew Sloan Draper, the son of Sylvester Bigelow and Jane (Sloan) Draper, was born at Westford, Otsego county, N. Y., June 21, 1848. On his father's side he was descended in direct line from James Draper, "The Puritan," who settled at Roxbury, Mass., in 1646. Through Mary Pratt, his paternal great-grandmother, he was descended from Degory Priest, one of the Mayflower Pilgrims. His mother was Scotch-Irish, her parents, Samuel Sloan and Rachel MacMinn, coming from near Belfast in Ireland in 1812. Two of his great-grandfathers were officers, and one of them was killed, in King Philip's War; and two others were soldiers in the Revolution. He attended the Albany public schools and graduated from the Albany Academy in 1866, and from the Albany Law School (Union University) with the degree of LL.B. in 1871. He taught in the Albany Academy and other institutions 1866-70; was a member of the law firm of Draper & Chester 1871-86; member of the Albany Board of Education 1879-81 and 1890-92; member of the Legislature in 1881; member of the State Normal College Board 1882-86 and became chairman thereof in 1886 and again in 1904; judge of the United States Court of Alabama Claims 1884-86; State Superintendent of Public Instruction 1886-92; superin-



tendent of Cleveland, Ohio, public schools 1892-94; president of the National Association of School Superintendents 1889-91; president of the University of Illinois 1894-1904; president of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools 1903-4. During Doctor Draper's presidency of the University of Illinois the institution erected a dozen substantial buildings, took on the organization of one of the very great universities of America and advanced from 750 to 3900 students. Upon the unification of the two State educational departments in New York in 1904, a special provision was inserted in the statute to make him eligible, and he was then recalled to his native State and made the first Commissioner of Education through election by the Legislature; his term expired March 31, 1910, and he was reelected by the Regents of the University for an indefinite term. His administration as Commissioner of Education was signalized by the complete unification and reorganization of the State education activities; the organization of the system of academic examinations, including the State Examinations Board; the enactment of legislation laying the foundation for vocational schools as a part of the public school system; the reorganization of courses of study in the State Normal Schools and in the State Normal College; the enactment of more stringent laws regulating admission to and practice in the various professions; the enactment and successful operation of the teachers retirement fund law; the enactment of legislation transferring the office of State Historian to the



Education Department; the inauguration of professional supervision of rural schools through the substitution of district superintendents for school commissioners; the reorganization of courses of study in the public schools so as to meet more clearly the needs of our present social and commercial conditions; the enactment of the State scholarship law; and the administration of the whole scheme of public education upon better business principles and sounder pedagogical standards. The State Education Building, one of the most beautiful and imposing buildings in the country, stands as an enduring monument to his administration.

Doctor Draper was a member of the Chicago Historical Society, of the State Historical Societies of New York, Illinois, and Wisconsin, of the St Louis Railway Club, of the Aurania Club, Albany, and of the legal fraternity of Phi Delta Phi. He was chairman of the board of trustees of the First Presbyterian Church, a director of the National Commercial Bank, and a governor of the Dudley Observatory, Albany, N. Y. He was chairman of the department of education of the International Congresses at the St Louis Exposition in 1904. In 1902 he was appointed by President Roosevelt a member of the United States Board of Indian Commissioners, and was chairman of the board until January 1913 when he resigned the office because of ill health. He declined the position of assistant United States attorney for the northern district of New York in 1882, and the position of superintendent of schools of the city of New York, to which he was elected

immediately after the formation of the greater city in 1898.

Doctor Draper wrote much, and spoke in every part of the country, upon educational themes. He published a book on the American-Spanish War, entitled *The Rescue of Cuba*; was the editor of the Department of Education in the *Encyclopedia Americana*, and the editor in chief of a ten volume work entitled *Self Culture for Young People*. He also published a book entitled *American Education*, comprising some of his more notable addresses, and he was the editor of the volume on Lincoln in the "Gateway Series."

Doctor Draper received the honorary degree of LL.D. from Colgate University in 1889, from Columbia University in 1903, from the University of Illinois upon the installation of his successor as president in 1905, and from Western Reserve University in 1910. He received the silver medal of the Paris Exposition in 1900 for his monograph on *Educational Organization and Administration in the United States*, and at the St Louis International Exposition in 1904 he was awarded the gold medal and two commemorative diplomas for his educational writings, and one of the two grand prizes conferred for conspicuous services to education.

On the 8th of May 1872, Doctor Draper was married at the South Congregational Church, New Britain, Conn., to Miss Abbie Louise Lyon, of that city. Mrs Draper, like her husband, is descended from the earliest New England stock. She is a true granddaughter of



the Revolution, her grandfather and a number of other ancestors having been soldiers in the War for Independence. Their children are Charlotte Leland, married May 8, 1907, to Arthur A. Brown, who is with the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company; and Edwin Lyon, a surgeon in practice at Albany, married October 14, 1908, to Miss Mary Frances Headen, of Shelbyville, Ill.



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